

THE CHRONICLE

of Early American Industries

VOLUME III, No. 2

DECEMBER, 1944

Chestnuts

By J. ALMUS RUSSELL

For a score of years and more the chestnut blight has killed off the New England chestnut trees once so numerous and valuable. As a result, a generation of our boys and girls has grown up in total ignorance of the delights of chestnutting. Consequently, we have had to depend upon the European chestnuts or *marrons*, larger in size but not as sweet. Now, every fall, I notice larger and larger trees, some containing a few burrs, evidently leading up to the development of a blight-resistant strain. In the course of a few years we may hope once more to enjoy the pleasures of *going chestnutting* on the crisp mellow sunny October days and securing the winter's supply just as our ancestors did in bygone days.

Ever since the settlement of my native township of Mason, N. H., almost two centuries ago, the chestnut tree furnished a staple timber and nut crop for the local farmers. This fast-growing tree started to bear fruit at five years of age. Its timber value began from the fifteenth year when the farmer used the wood for railroad-ties, fence-posts, piling, firewood; and in older trees, lumber. At maturity the tree may reach a height of almost one hundred feet with a trunk six to eight feet in diameter.

In my boyhood, during the beginning of the haying season, sometime after the Fourth of July, we would awaken some clear warm morning to sniff a strange exotic fragrance on the summer air, only to discover that the chestnut trees crowning the esker back of the homestead, had burst into full bloom during the night. A high-pitched humming warned us that the bees, wasps, and humming-birds were removing the honey from these rich cream-

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Documentary Notes

Compiled by PENROSE R. HOOPES

VIII.

Albany, December 27. Description of the works lately erected by Mr. James Caldwell, of this city, merchant, who is sole proprietor thereof.

The buildings belonging to these works, extend, on a line along the front, about 200 feet.—That part which contains the machinery of the mills, is 42 feet front—One water wheel of three and a half feet wide, with one and a half inch water, by an upright shaft, puts in motion the snuff-mill—which consists of 4 mortars, 16 rollers and a snuff-bolt.—A mustard mill—with 2 large rollers, 4 mortars and stampers.—A chocolate mill—with a run of stones and cocoa-roaster.—An engine, for cutting smoking tobacco. A machine for cutting the tobacco for the snuff-mill, and a large grind-stone, for the use of the works. It likewise gives motion to an elegant colossal figure of a man, under a pediment, in the front of the building, represented in the act of turning a winch, from which all the machinery apparently receives motion. The tobacco is pressed and brought to the knife of the cutting-machine on a plan entirely new, without manual labour.—All these works, together with a kiln for preparing the mustard seed, are on the first and second floor. Any part may be set in motion or stopt without effecting the others. On the third floor is a kiln for tobacco—both kilns are on a new and improved construction. Here are a number of hands constantly employed in packing snuff and tobacco.

The house for drying and curing tobacco, adjoins

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the mill on the west, and is 70 feet in front. The fire places are constructed with such improvements, as not to require one fourth the wood commonly used for the like purpose. The upper part is occupied as a store-room for tobacco.

The house on the west contains the Tobacco-Manufactory. On the lower floor of which are nine complete presses, and a room where the tobacco is formed into rolls, in a manner never before discovered, without either pins or thorns—Of which invention the merit is solely due to the manufacturer. On the second floor the spinning is done—where twenty four hands are constantly employed in the various parts of the business; Here is a machine by which one boy can turn for 6 or 8 tables—and can stop either, when occasion requires, without interrupting the rest. This last improvement has often been attempted both in Europe and America, but has never before been brought to the perfection it is here. The 3d floor is a store room.

The water is conveyed to the mill by a trench, and from thence passes off by a subterraneous conduit, over which is the main road; and the water-wheel is so sheltered, that neither can be perceived from the inside or outside of the mill.

Besides these buildings there is an elegant and commodious dwelling house and several out-houses belonging to the manufactory—all disposed in such a manner as to make a beautiful appearance. They are situated about one mile from the center of the city of Albany, and four hundred yards west of the mansion house of Stephen VanRensselaer, Esq. (the proprietor of the manor of Rensselaerwyck) at the entrance of that delightful valley through which a never-failing stream passes, that turns a number of other mills, within sight of each other.

Mr. Christopher Batterman, a young man, a native of Boston, is the architect, to whose ingenuity the plan of the works and the various improvements in the execution are to be ascribed, as he was solely entrusted by Mr. Caldwell, with the construction of them—He is at present in this city, and intends making it the place of his residence.

The snuff-mill is in such high perfection, that by going only 9 months in the year, more snuff can be produced, it is said, than is consumed annually in the northern part of America.

Mr. John Currie, from the city of Hartford in Connecticut, a skillful young man, has the superintendence of the snuff manufactory, having been regularly bred to that branch.

The proprietor of the above works having laid out a very large capital in erecting them, intends to spare no pains to make the articles he manufactures, exceed in quality, any which are imported from abroad. And those which he has already produced, we are informed, are in the highest repute.

We may add without vanity or prejudice, that these works are superior to any of the kind in America: and it must be allowed, that while we produce such samples, we give evidence of an emulation which will, in a few years, in all probability, place Albany on a footing with the first cities on the continent.

(The General Advertiser, Phila. Jan. 7, 1791)

IX.

The Culture of Hemp

The following observations on the raising of Hemp were communicated to the Committee for promoting Agriculture, by John Read, Esquire, of Roxbury, and are published by desire of said Committee.

The soil I choose for raising Hemp, is a light, rich mould, as free from stones, gravel and clay, as possible. Care is taken to have the soil thoroughly manured, & once well ploughed in the fall of the year, if other business will admit. In the spring it is ploughed two or three times more, and as often harrowed with an iron-toothed harrow, in order to separate the particles of earth, and leave them as light as possible; then a light brush harrow drawn by one horse over the ground, by which means it is levelled so as to receive the seed equally, after which, it is marked out for sowing, in the same manner that barley and oats are generally sown; calculating (if the soil is very good) at two and a half bushels to an acre. The seed is always harrowed in, immediately after sowing, with a fine iron-toothed harrow, and nothing is suffered to pass over it afterwards, least by treading or otherwise it might be injured.

The seed must be of the last year's growth, and will be benefited by lying in the cellar a few weeks previous to its being sown. In general, I sow my seed the middle of May (being governed by the season)—a little sooner or later will do. My hemp is commonly fit to pull by the 8th or 10th of August; which is known by the male hemp turning whitish just at the time when the farina passes off; this is easily discovered by its smoking when agitated by the wind, or jarred with a stick.

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Early American Industries

The Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown

By JANET R. MACFARLANE, Acting Director

It was the farmer and his method of livelihood, over and above the soil he tilled and the crops he raised, which furnished the background for our story of crafts as told in the Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown. The material exhibited is in two sections, the agricultural and the early industrial or crafts tools, with some few tangential items which point to trends for future development.

The farm was a small community in the early settlement days. Thus the farmer and his wife were obliged to administer it as such, and to provide for themselves many of the necessities of life now purchasable in stores. Later, individual farmers grouped together and we find a blacksmith shoeing horses for a number of farmers and a cobbler shoeing the feet of many farmers and their families. The mother of each household spun flax and wool into thread, then produced yarn goods on her looms. From this material the family was clothed, and her linen and blankets were hand dyed and hand woven, as well. It is planned to tell the story of weaving, spinning, flax breaking and dying of cloth in our farming displays.

We are able to do this at the Farmers' Museum by means of over 5,000 items, already cataloged, from material collected in the past two and a half years. The contributors were many, although the largest group of articles, and in many ways the best, came, just prior to his death, from William B. Sprague, founder of the *Early American Industries Association*.

The Farmers' Museum was originally designed with a two fold purpose, historical and educational. The first was as a commemoration of what is said to be the first county fair held in New York State, sponsored by James Fenimore Cooper and Elkanah Watson in October, 1817, at Cooperstown. The second was its establishment as an educational venture through which the study of early agricultural methods and farm life could be advanced.

The Farmers' Museum was established by Stephen C. Clark as a memorial to his brother, the late Edward Severin Clark, agriculturist and many times president of the Otsego County Agricultural Society. The museum is a depository for early farm implements used in the Eastern United States. Its collections are administered by the New York State

Historical Association which also maintains its general museum in Cooperstown.

The establishment is a natural setting for an agricultural and crafts museum. Its field stone buildings are attractive architecturally, and nestle closely under the hill to the rear. At one end is a natural amphitheater where folk plays and community meetings can be held. The entire group overlooks the village golf course, assuring a vista of nearby Otsego Lake.

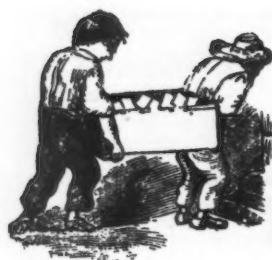
A two story stone cattle barn has been converted into four major exhibition halls, and an auditorium. The upper grain storage is now housing plows, hop picking equipment, scythes, harrows, reapers, sowers, winnowing baskets, fanning mills and wooden rakes, and also historical pieces as a plow used on the Cherry Valley Turnpike and many other items of local or general interest. One is reminded, seeing the collection, of a statement on the methods in the Middle Atlantic States around 1820 made by Everett Edwards in his book on American Agriculture, published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture: "Cultivation was extensive and exploitive, tools clumsy, systematic crop rotation and fertilizers generally absent, livestock neglected, and orchards and woodlands badly managed. . . . Implements were few in number, most farmers being able to carry all they possessed on their backs, and the plows were home-made wooden contrivances with a plating or iron strips added by the local blacksmith."

The lower portion of the great stone Coopers-town barn which housed dairy cows has been levelled, the stanchions removed, and the walls painted a cream color. In the resulting low ceilinged room alcoves have been constructed for exhibits and an informal continuity of displays on early crafts and industries has been followed. These "shop" alcoves have been opened to the public first because the collections shown there were cataloged and partially labelled over the winter months, when the main halls remained unheated. Here, therefore, may now be seen the tools of the lumberer, builder, carpenter, shingle maker, cooper, cobbler, tanner, blacksmith, harness maker, roofer, tinsmith, glove maker, straw and felt hat maker, comb maker, basket and broom maker, the syrup industry and the wheelwright. Not only do we show the tools which these people used but many of the tools which made the implements. The historical sequence is thus carried farther back.

The vehicle collection of the Farmers' Museum is unique in many instances. There are goose neck

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The Chronicle



The
Chronicle
issued occasionally for members of
**EARLY AMERICAN
INDUSTRIES ASS'N**

The purpose of the association is to encourage the study and better understanding of early American industry, in the home, in the shop, on the farm, and on the sea, and especially to discover, identify, classify, preserve and exhibit obsolete tools, implements, utensils, instruments, vehicles, appliances and mechanical devices used by American craftsmen, farmers, housewives, mariners, professional men and other workers.

WARREN C. LANE, *President*,
Becker Business College, Worcester, Mass.

MRS. FRANK D. PIERCE, *Secretary and Treasurer*,
Leicester, Mass.

JOHN DAVIS HATCH, JR., *Editor*,
Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, N. Y.
Communications regarding the contents of *The Chronicle* should be addressed to the Editor; Suggestions for members and other matters either to the President or the Secretary-Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP: Beginning January, 1945, regular membership will be \$2.00.

Supporting Members contribute \$5.00 or more a year.

BACK NUMBERS of *The Chronicle* are available in some instances for fifty cents or one dollar, depending on rarity. The Index to Volume I is available for one dollar.

Editor's Note:

December is hardly October though we are still following the plan of quarterly issues—July, October, January and April. We threatened last time to issue a quarterly at the time it was due regardless of the amount of copy on hand but we did not quite have the courage to do so. Now we have enough to make a fatter issue, or one of nearer normal size. We are at least in press. It is the old Editor's wail again. We need articles.

Comments received back from a number of members suggest approval of the new kind of format. Many find it more convenient; others apparently appreciate it keeping the spirit of early industries.

Early American Industries seem to be having a share in the present Americana revival which is manifest through the country. In July, August, and September the Phillips Academy at Andover, Massa-

chusetts, had an exhibit on "Bygone Domestic Devices—Ingenious Gadgets of a Century Ago." The material was all made available for the public to handle.

Now the Providence, Rhode Island, Museum is likewise having an exhibit of similar materials on the old crafts of Rhode Island. There are undoubtedly other exhibits being held in the country of which the Editor hasn't heard. He finds them all pleasant news, however, and hopes members will write in whenever such exhibits come to their attention.

Farmers' Museum (Continued)

sleighs, ox carts, hop pickers, wagons, a conestoga wagon, stage coach, cutters, fire engines, ox tread threshing machines and carriages. A band wagon, seating ten instrumentalists, will be used for outdoor concerts later in one of the rear courts of the building. Most of these vehicles were offered without solicitation. The museist's enthusiasm for the preservation of articles about to be destroyed, it should be added, governed the acceptance of gifts on a few occasions. Some of these may seem incongruous for a Farmers' Museum but the eventual village plan it is believed will show a use for them all.

The agricultural development will be slow, but the twenty-five acres of ground should make an ideal spot for experimental crops and the construction of display groupings, such as a setting of hops. Here the historical directive will not be lost.

A village green is planned south of the main barn. Here, nestled against a hill the country store, smithy, district school house, pioneer cabin, grist and saw mills, as part of the ultimate plan, will present an attractive appearance. The stone store, now in process of re-erection, was the old Rufus Steere store run at Toddsville, New York, in connection with the Steere knitting mills. Installation of the interior will wait until next spring.

The entire development gains importance in being restricted to the Eastern portion of the United States, with emphasis on New York, where possible. Many village and museum plans go too far afield in their search for material, thus losing continuity and effectiveness in their search for the unusual. The Farmers' Museum anticipates a compact village development with a gradual expansion in the agricultural history field in the surrounding acres.

The Farmers' Museum is closed until next spring although the workshops remain in operation.

Early American Industries

Documentary Notes (Continued)

When the hemp is pulled, it is spread on the ground where it grew, about an inch thick, and what that will not receive is carried off to other ground; and after laying two or three days, it is turned with a small pole about six feet long; then, receiving one or two days more sun, it is bound into bundles of about 15 or 18 inches in circumference, and immediately housed from wet until convenient time offers to put it into water for rotting, which is done as soon as other business will admit.—There being a small stream of water that runs through my farm, I have erected a dam, which enables me to flow a pond about five or six feet high, wherein the hemp is lain (much in the same manner that flax is laid for rotting), and after covering it with straw to keep it clean, (it is to be observed, that a muddy bottom will require straw previous to the Hemp being laid thereon) the plank and stones being placed thereon, the dam-gate is shut down, and the hemp being overflowed, remains till it is properly rotted; which is done in six or seven days, if put in as soon as the latter end of August, or the beginning of September the weather being generally warm at that season of the year; If put into the water the latter end of September or beginning of October, I have let it lay 12 days; if the latter end of October or beginning of November, 20 days, unless the weather has been uncommonly warm for the season; in that case, I have found it necessary to be removed sooner, but have made a point of attending to the heat or cold of the weather, as when the water is warm the hemp will get a proper rot much sooner than when it is otherways.

My practice has been, to draw the water from the hemp 24 hours before the taking it up, leaving the weight thereon in order that it may be well drained, as in that case it is much better handled: then it is removed to a dry piece of ground and spread about two inches thick, and after remaining a week or 10 days in that situation, is turned, and in 8 or 10 days after, it is taken up, tied in bundles, and removed into the barn, where it remains till I have leisure time to break and swingle it out.—When barn-room cannot be spared, I have placed it up against a rail fence, running the top-ends between the two uppermost rails, letting it remain there until proper time for breaking, for which purpose I have always found clear cold weather to be the best.

My hemp is broke and swingled much in the same manner that flax is done, excepting that the first

breaking is done in a coarse break, the teeth or flats being nearly four inches apart; then a common flax-break answers well; and being carefully swingled, it is fit for use.

My practice for raising seed hath been to set apart in the field some of my best grown hemp for that purpose, pulling up the male and female hemp for about 18 inches in the width, so that a man may pass through; leaving the other in beds about six feet in width, in order that two men (one on each side) may reach in their hands and pull up all the male, without injuring the seed bearing hemp.

This process is performed when the general pulling is done in August—the female hemp must stand till the seed is fully ripe, which is known by its turning brown—in wet weather I have been obliged to let it stand till the middle of October before it was fit to pull; after which it must be tied in bundles, like the other hemp, and carefully set up against a fence to dry, or if that is not convenient it may be laid on the ground, and after one or two days sun, beat out in the same manner that flax seed is beat out, striking lightly; then expose the other side to the sun one or two days, after which give it a thorough beating, and spread the seed with all the leaves, &c. in a dry place for some days, then thrash it with a light flail or rub it by hand, either way, till the seed is all out, and after winnowing, put it in a dry place for sowing the next year.

The seed bearing hemp requires a few days longer to rot than the other, owing to the thickness of the bark or hurle, and the greater quantity of glutinous substance occasioned by its longer standing.

I have always preferred old manure to new, more especially if horse or cow dung, but new will do, and it is much the better to have it ploughed in, in the fall.

With respect to the quantity of hemp, raised on an acre of ground, it varies from six to twelve hundred weight, much depending on the quality of the soil and the manner of preparing it.

The expence of cultivating, &c. an acre of hemp, is not at present in my power to ascertain, great part of the business being done at leisure and when the time could be best spared; I would just observe, that I can raise two or three acres yearly on my small farm, without interfering much with other business.

The present price of hemp, together with the bounty given by the state, to encourage the agriculture of this useful plant, amounts to about 220 dollars per ton, which bid fair to establish its growth

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Chestnuts (Continued)

colored "lashes." Seldom did they blossom low enough to permit of our picking bouquets, but, nevertheless, we enjoyed them from a distance; and as such, these trees became a favorite shade tree around New England farmsteads.

Much of our hardwood supply came from the chestnut Forty Acre Lot. Mother always refused to allow chestnut logs to be used for fireplace fuel, even when the wood was well-seasoned. Something in the makeup of the wood caused the burning chunks to throw out sparks on the unpainted softwood floors. Indeed, many a floor-board still shows burnt "pocks" where a dying coal left its indelible imprint.

With such a late blossoming an excellent nut crop seldom failed us. All through September the small boys and red squirrels watched the green burrs, encased in their needlelike armor, growing ever larger and larger. One morning we arose to hear the chipmunks chattering in the branches and the sound of burrs falling to the ground. We hastened to don shirts and overalls, rushed out to the grove, climbed up among the branches, and with seasoned rods kept for that purpose knocked the half-opened burrs onto the ground, where we picked up the loose nuts and released those which were only partially spread apart by the frost of the previous night.

Some of the smaller burrs yielded but one nut; others two and three nuts apiece.

Father brought out of the house several wooden half- and quarter-peck measures. When we had filled them with chestnuts we poured the contents into sugar-sacks and took them home to pour out on old newspapers on the floor of the little used back-chamber. To protect them from the red and gray squirrels we were careful neither to leave any of the back-chamber windows open nor to prolong the drying process longer than necessary. As soon as possible, mother stored the chestnuts in paper bags, hung by strings from nails driven into the ceiling rafters.

Mother always boiled a saucepan of nuts on Sunday afternoon until the meat reached the consistency of a well-baked potato for father's teeth were too tender for raw chestnuts. With the small blade of his jackknife he would then split off each shell and eat the contents of the nut with appreciative relish.

We children enjoyed them better when we greased each fat nut, laid every one flat-side down on the surface of an iron frying-pan to roast; first, however, taking care to cut a notch in the skin of each

to prevent them from "flying off." When done, we served them right from the frying-pan to mouth although our more polite neighbors used them this way for dessert, wrapping them in a napkin to keep them as hot as possible. An alternative process was to boil the nuts in plenty of water, remove them from the water when nearly done, and roast them until tender.

In the nearby district school more than one lad repented himself of his recklessness, not only in sitting down on a sharp chestnut burr but also of the ensuing punishment following his sudden cries of pain and anger. But such accidents were soon forgotten in the recess-pleasure of raking together large masses of dried chestnut leaves for running-and-jumping-upon-piles. Our own piles father and I carefully removed in early evening in a large tarpaulin, gathered up at the four corners, and carried to the leaf-bin in the far corner of the barn to use for winter cattle-bedding.

In our own locality we had an adequate toothsome substitute for the imported French delicacy of Marron Glacés. Ours for lack of a better name I shall call—

Chestnut Suckers

Chestnuts, 4 cups	Sugar, 2 cups
Water, 2 cups	Vanilla, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon

Slit each chestnut. Roast the chestnut in an iron frying-pan. Skin the roasted nuts while the inside meat is still a rich yellow. Insert a small wooden skewer in each one.

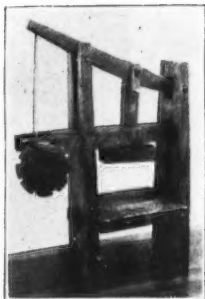
Boil the sugar and water to the candying stage. Add the vanilla. Dip each nut into the mixture. Stick the ends of the skewers into a dish of brown sugar to drain and harden.

Grandmother's Stuffed Roast Turkey was always a savory feature of our New England Thanksgiving reunion; and as native to the day was the succulent chestnut stuffing which filled this bird. Of course there are many modern variations of this dressing but none ever tasted better on a cold November holiday than—

Chestnut Stuffing

2	cups boiled chestnuts
1	cup dry cracker crumbs
$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$	cup boiling water
1	egg
	turkey liver
$\frac{1}{4}$	cup melted butter
1	teaspoon celery salt
1	teaspoon table salt

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CHEESE PRESS (left): Mid 18th century.

39½ inches x 16 inches x 53½ inches. Made for 15½ inch cheese mould. Peg construction throughout, except two replaced cogs on wheel.



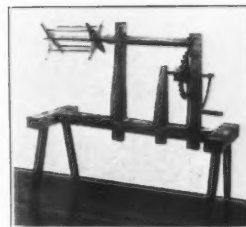
SHOVEL PLOW (right): c 1830.

Iron part 19 inches across x 18¾ inches high. Used on Henry Sniffen farm, Knollwood. Peg and hand forged bolt construction.



WHEEL BENCH (left): Probably 1870 or earlier.

20¾ inches to 21¼ inches x 22½ inches to 25 inches x 27¾ inches. Used at Laurens, N. Y.

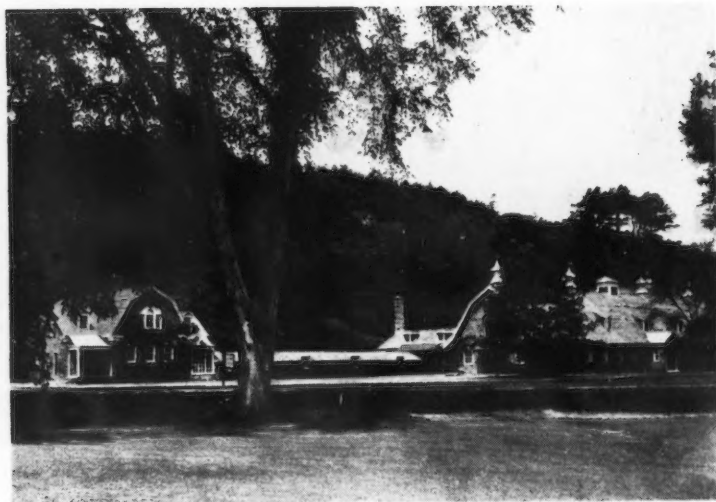


ROPE-MAKING MACHINE (right): Undated—probably early 19th century. 47 inches x 22¾ inches x 43½ inches. Wrought iron cog wheels, leather staples, peg and mortice construction.



HAND HOLLOWED BARREL (left): 1810 or earlier. 19¾ inches to 21½ inches in diameter, 30 inches high. Made from trunk of basswood tree. Rathole in top.

VARIED PIECES FROM THE FARMERS' MUSEUM



THE FARMERS' MUSEUM, COOPERSTOWN, N. Y.



EXHIBITION HALL OF THE FARMERS' MUSEUM

Early American Industries

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Ithaca: Whitney R. Cross (1405) Curator, Collection of Regional History, Cornell University (N)
New York City: Robert R. Endicott (841) 400 Madison Ave., Zone 17 (Ch); Duncan Little (1250) 33 West 67th St., Zone 23 (Ch)
- PENNSYLVANIA
Lancaster: H. K. Landis (1432) Landis Valley Museum (N)
Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh (1425) (N)
West Chester: Francis D. Brinton (31) Oermead Farm (Ch)
- RHODE ISLAND
Greene: Miss Mittie Arnold (1399) Arnold Farm (Correction)
- WISCONSIN
Madison: Wisconsin State Historical Society (1431) (N)

Chestnuts (Continued)

- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon poultry dressing

Skin and mash the chestnuts.
Boil and mash the liver.
Work the egg with the hands into the cracker-crumbs.
Mix with the boiling water.
Let stand for two hours.
Mix all of the ingredients thoroughly together.
Stuff the turkey with the mixture.

Cast-Iron Plough-Shares

By COL. JOHN SMITH

During the last spring and summer, in ploughing my fields, I made use of the cast plough-share, which was exhibited to the Agricultural Society, at their meeting during the last session of the legislature, and found it to exceed my most sanguine expectations. It is cast in the form of a Dutch share after the vest model that could be procured by the Society, with this exception, that the edge is not complete, and not so wide by about three inches, at it will be when finished with the false edge, which is made of wrought iron or steel, and fastened on with rivets. The soil in which I used this share, was light and free from stone, though I believe, with careful usage, it will answer in any other soil, although the same may be stony and incumbered with stumps. This plough-share besides answering every purpose of those made of wrought-iron will last to plough as much as two of the latter, before it is worn out, the cast-iron being nearly as durable as steel before it is hardened. By this experiment, it is very obvious, that the cast plough-share will be very beneficial to farmers, and ought to be encouraged by this Society. They may be had of Mr. Peter T. Curtenius of New York, either with or without the edge, which is made of wrought iron or steel.

From the Reprinted Transactions of the Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts and Manufactures, Albany, 1801.

Documentary Notes (Continued)

here, and I am fully satisfied from my own experience, that at the present day no branch of agriculture (where land is found suitable) can be carried on to so great advantage as that of raising hemp, and I have no doubt that our farmers will soon be convinced of the truth of this observation. It having been found by experience, both in Europe and America, that hemp may be grown on the same ground for 20 or 30 years in succession without lessening the crop or impoverishing the soil—this also will have its weight. . .

N.B. A man that understands the breaking and swingling hemp well, will clean from 40 to 50 wt. per day.

(Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's Magazine, Elizabeth-Town. April-May, 1789. pp. 109-111)

The Chronicle

Communications

Herbert T. Shannon's query regarding a chisel brought a number of answers. H. Armour Smith suggests such tools were used in old days to fashion ship's timbers. H. P. Perry of Trenton, N. J., also sent in a suggestion. Edward R. Flint of Springfield, Vermont, sends the following contribution:

"In our community we call this tool a slick. It was used by the old time carpenter in smoothing mortar and tenant when framing a building. It was very heavy and sharp—and was guided by one hand and pushed by the other and left both mortar and tenant very smooth or slick. It helped to make those nearly perfect joints we find in old buildings. I have three of them in my collection and none of them are exactly alike as different smiths made them.

If Mr. Shannon cared to come to our next fair at Tunbridge, Vermont, we should show him how it was used as we have a full set of framing tools—framing saw, pod auger—and have men demonstrate hewing with the broad axe, making mortar and tenant, sawing with the up and down saw where one is on top and the other is down under the log, sawing out boards by hand, splitting and shaving shingles, etc."

For those not able to go to the Tunbridge Fair the following, sent by Horace M. Mann of the Bucks County Historical Society, would be helpful:

"The tool submitted by Herbert T. Shannon in the July issue of The Chronicle is a Paring Chisel. This old tool was not used extensively by the carpenter but was used by the cabinet-maker until machine tools superseded the hand tools.

There is nothing to distinguish it from the

forming chisel, except its purpose. It was not and should not be struck with the mallet, but is worked by hand or body pressure and not used to start chisel work, but to follow the forming chisel and to smooth the rough cuts of the latter. Therefore its edge must be kept extra sharp. They appear in various sizes. The large sizes were called by Pennsylvania wood-workers a 'slick'. See *Ancient Carpenters' Tools*, Henry C. Mercer, The Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pa., 1929, page 166.

Mechanick Exercises or the Doctrine of Handy-Works, Joseph Moxon, London, 1703, carefully describes the typical paring chisel as held against the right shoulder or grasped by the right hand with two middle fingers of the left hand pressing on the blade for unobstructed sight of the edge or surface worked upon."

One of our friends is desirous of obtaining a carpenters' vise as used in older days. If anyone should know of one available, or where a plan for reproducing one might be available, the Editor would appreciate having word.

The following query has come to us from Ethel Haines of Catskill, New York:

"We have an old bench or 'horse' which was used for making barrel hoops. I wrote to an association, describing the bench and sending a sketch, and they replied that it was a cooper's horse, used for making staves and not hoops. However, my father, who is 76 years old, distinctly remembers seeing them used for making *hoops*, and has successfully demonstrated how it was done. Can you tell me where I can find more information about this?"

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